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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The Wall Street Journal

July 21, 2007 Saturday

SECTION: PURSUITS; Pg. P7

LENGTH: 1022 words

HEADLINE: Style -- Menswear: Jean Therapy for Older Guys --- As men's sales sag, makers court the over-40 crowd; roomier 'gentleman's jeans'

BYLINE: By Ray A. Smith

BODY:

Defying conventional fashion wisdom, jeans makers are courting older guys.

In an effort to appeal to the over-40 crowd, many jeans makers are trimming back the intimidating array of basic jeans choices that overwhelm some men. They're taking edgy and fashion-forward shapes out of what they call their core lines to make it easier for older men to find comfortable jeans that don't make them look like they're trying to dress like a teenager.

Lee Jeans, for instance, now has six basic fits, including regular and relaxed, down from eight a few years ago. Banana Republic dropped its baggy so-called utility fit, reducing its core options to three. And premium label Paper Denim & Cloth has cut its fits down to four from six. The core lines are the traditional shapes that retailers stock at all times, as opposed to ultra-trendy versions that come and go.

Jeans makers are also emphasizing so-called gentleman's jeans, a mid- to high-rise style that is roomier in the seat and thighs, and aimed at a more mature crowd. Indigo Palms, by Tommy Bahama, and Liz Claiborne's Lucky Brand label both make a jean in this roomy shape. The Joseph Abboud label, owned by JA Apparel, last year introduced a roomier-fit jean designed specifically for men over 40 and next year plans to introduce a dressier version it calls Blazer Jean.

"Everyone is making tight-fitting jeans. Who's making fashion jeans for the 50-year-old?" asks Marty Staff, JA Apparel's chief executive.

Jeans makers are under pressure to improve overall sales, which fell 2.8% to \$4.44 billion in the 12 months ended in May, according to NPD Group. The push for baby boomers has taken hold as sales of jeans to the over-40 crowd are increasing, while sales to younger men are falling. Jeans sales to men between 45 and 54 were up 7.6% in the same

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12-month period, while sales to men between aged 18 to 24 fell 11.1%.

Basic jeans options don't change throughout the year, so many stores such as the Gap keep them grouped together, away from more seasonal ranges. But that doesn't mean buying a new pair of jeans is easy. While the range of basic fits is being reduced, many companies are still courting younger guys with a proliferation of seasonal choices, particularly variations on the popular skinny jean.

To add to the confusion: After choosing a fit or shape, shoppers still have to decide what kind of denim they like (anything from stonewashed to sandblasted) and the overall style of jean, which could include where the pants sit on the waist.

Some companies are still adding more choices. Levi's Red Tab collection alone has 15 fits, including two -- a super-skinny silhouette called the 510, and a relaxed fit with a slim tailored bottom called the 520 -- that were added in the last year. Wrangler's mass market line now has 10 fits, up from nine last year and four five years ago.

All the choices overwhelm shoppers like Jerry Dallessio, who assumed it would be easy to buy a pair of jeans last-minute before heading out on vacation. But when he arrived at a department store in Paramus, N.J., he was confronted with so many choices that he panicked.

"It's like an explosion," he says. Rather than peruse all of the options, the 55-year-old went to the core range and chose a regular fit that he had been buying for years.

To help men navigate the choices better, several stores and jeansmakers are using hang tags and store displays to better explain the different styles. Paper Denim & Cloth, whose hang tags used to focus on aesthetics like style and wash, now uses the tags to describe its fits. "We felt like design-wise, the [old] tags were hip but it really wasn't helpful to the consumer," says Kim Tuber, vice president of sales.

Earlier this year, Lucky Brand installed signs in its stores that describe the fit, rise and the width of its jeans' leg openings in inches, rather than just showing pictures of them.

The proliferation of men's jean fits, washes and styles followed a similar pattern in the women's market. Jeans makers saw men as a big untapped market and started trying to apply a strategy that had been successful with women: introduce tight-fitting jeans in a variety of washes and cuts. They were spurred on by reports that some fashion-forward young men had begun buying some of the new women's styles, says James Sullivan, author of the book "Jeans: A Cultural History of An American Icon."

Men who want to freshen up the jeans in their closet without going overboard, should reach for a basic "straight fit" jean. In keeping with a broader trend in dressy as well as casual menswear toward more fitted clothing, straight-fit jeans are an emerging core category between trendy super-skinny jeans and regular-fit jeans. Straight-fit jeans are closer to the body than regular-fit and relaxed-fit jeans but not as close as skinny jeans.

"It's a more polished fit," says image consultant Anna Soo Wildermuth. The straight fit tends to come with a straight leg that falls right on the shoe rather than covering it, in line with the more cleaned-up look. "It almost has the look of a slim khaki," she says.

Darker washes, meaning dark blue jeans, are currently in style after a few seasons of bleached, antiqued, stonewashed and faded looks. Dark blue jeans also look dressier than lighter jeans and are easier to pair with a sport coat and dress shoes for the office or a night out, style consultants say.

"I very rarely recommend that men wear light-wash jeans for business casual or to the office, because to me, [a light-wash jean] is a ballpark jean," says wardrobe consultant Robin Walker.

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JEANSPEAK 101

FIT: The shape of the jean; how roomy or tight it will be in the seat and hip area.

WASH: The color and texture resulting from how the denim was washed during the production process.

RISE: The length of the fabric from crotch seam to the top of the waistband; also describes where the jeans "sit" in relation to the waist.

STYLE: Describes the overall look of the jeans, including fit, wash and the cut of the leg opening.

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February 5, 2007

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 42

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HEADLINE: CATCHING UP WITH MARTY STAFF JA APPAREL'S CEO LOOKS TO 2007 TO BE A WATERSHED YEAR

BYLINE: Stan Gellers

BODY:

NEW YORK - Marty Staff took over the CEO post at JA Apparel on March 30, 2004, and the Joseph Abboud designer company has been in overdrive ever since. Known for his ebullient, often over-the-top style, Staff looks to 2007 as his company's first "tipping year" when he expects his various projects and initiatives to finally come to fruition.

After top-level stints at Calvin Klein and Polo Ralph Lauren, Staff headed up Hugo Boss's U.S. division. Following that, he led the J.W. Childs Associates' \$74 million buyout of JA Apparel three years ago and, with a minority ownership, he took over the top job there.

Three years ago, total wholesale volume at the company was \$108 million, with \$25 million generated by licensing and \$83 million from own products. This year, Staff expects the combined own products and licensing volume to be 2 1/2 times as much. "From 2003 to 2007, profits doubled and licensing revenues increased more than 500 percent," he says. "And this year for the first time licensing revenues will be more than volume from own businesses"

That, however, is just the beginning of the changes under way at JA Apparel. "We're no longer a suit company," he says. "We're a lifestyle brand, and non-apparel products contribute a major portion of our volume. Licensed products are 60 percent of the total."

This leap in revenue resulted in part from a change in the demographics of the company's core customers. "In the old days," he says, "we sold suits to the 35-to-54 age group. Now we've expanded that and we're going after the 22-to-30 customer with our JOE brand, which is licensed by Peerless, and they're also doing boys' suits."

Two other milestone decisions were made. "First, we only want to sell the best retailers," says Staff. "Second, we're only selling a total of 415 doors of the best department and specialty stores. They'll generate a quarter of a billion in revenues this year."

JA Apparel has come up with four different models for its core customers. The first is a gentleman's seven-inch drop suit with a touch of shape; the second is what Staff describes as a "sexy center-vent model with more shape"; the third is a new relaxed sport coat with details that bridge into sportswear and, finally, the company is continuing its original model that's been updated and trimmed down in strategic places, which used to be 95 percent of JA's suit business. Now it's 60 percent.

CATCHING UP WITH MARTY STAFF JA APPAREL'S CEO LOOKS TO 2007 TO BE A WATERSHED YEAR
DNR February 5, 2007

Historically, tailored clothing has always been the company's biggest classification and, with the broader model selection, the numbers are expected to grow by 40 percent between 2004 and 2007. In 2004 tailored clothing was 67 percent of the business, but that number now is down to 60 percent because of the hike in sportswear. Staff calls the clothing "more relevant, more updated-and we're getting upward price pressure from retailers. We no longer do a fused coat, we're half-canvas. We were \$695-\$895 retail and, for next fall, we'll be \$795-\$995."

What makes JA Apparel somewhat unusual in today's marketplace is the fact that it's one of the handful of tailored clothing companies still manufacturing in the U.S., using its own facility in New Bedford, Mass. Aside from the obvious geographical advantage of the location, Staff points out that 40 percent of the non-union workers at the factory are option holders. He adds that a double-digit percent of the company is owned by employees and reports, "They think like owners."

The Massachusetts location has the potential to pay off in still another way with the company's recently launched made-to-measure program, called the "Personal Style System." With the clothing produced in New Bedford, the usual eight-week turnaround time in the industry has been cut to just two weeks. Staff already predicts that made-to-measure will become five percent of the company's total business.

Another category gaining steam is trousers, which will fill a void Staff currently sees in the market. "There are good pants at \$150 and there a good pants at \$300, but nothing at \$200," he points out. "So we're going to hit the market with a \$195 trouser."

Referring to sportswear, Staff says he inherited it in 2002 as "irrelevant and without a point of view at the time. So we made it trendy and moderately expensive. But it was too much, too soon. For fall we went back to our roots and the new collection is for someone who's bored with Polo and not ready for Hugo Boss. We're American-driven with a European sensibility, and the only other line with a similar attitude is John Varvatos."

With this new formula, Staff expects a considerable boost in JA's sportswear business, and by 2009 he estimates that tailored clothing will be 50 percent of sales, sportswear 35 percent and shirts and ties 15 percent. And he says sportswear is already on the right track, with fall orders 50 percent ahead.

Staff also plans to make the brand much more visible at the trade and consumer levels (the New Bedford plant recently nabbed a page-one story in the Boston Globe), so he booked more exhibit space at the recent Collective show in New York and signed up the company as a co-sponsor at the opening night party at MAGIC.

There's a very solid business side to Staff and typical was his brainstorm to develop an exclusive, limited number of specialty-store packages for retailers in different areas. His reasoning is pure and simple: "We want to be the best at partnering with the best department and specialty stores. I'm not interested in what they buy, but what they sell."

GRAPHIC: From left, ads for JOE, Joseph Abboud boys' wear and Joseph Abboud / Staff in his office

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The Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

January 10, 2007 Wednesday
All Editions

SECTION: BUSINESS; Pg. E-01

LENGTH: 908 words

HEADLINE: Men's apparel company expands in New Bedford

BYLINE: Paul Grimaldi, Journal Staff Writer

BODY:

Joseph Abboud suits is moving its distribution operations to the Whaling City and increasing its work force.

A new clothing distribution center opened yesterday in New Bedford, Mass., as the maker of Joseph Abboud suits continues reshaping a decades-old textile manufacturing operation into one tailored to the shopping habits of Web-savvy consumers.

"The consumer rules," said Marty Staff, president and chief executive officer of JA Apparel Corp. "He wants what he wants when he wants it, and he wants it gift-wrapped with a smile.

"We have to be responsive to today's market."

To do that, the New York-based company reshaped the way workers craft the suits and sport coats they make, pulled distribution from a New Jersey contract operation to its New Bedford factory and expanded its work force in the Whaling City to 590 people - about 20 percent more than when it bought the men's suit designer in 2004.

Good news for New Bedford and the rest of the SouthCoast, according to the Center for Policy Analysis at UMass-Dartmouth. The city lost more than 12,000 manufacturing jobs in the 20 years from 1985 to 2005.

In 1985, there were 20,528 manufacturing jobs in New Bedford. By 2005, there were only 8,045.

In a region once dominated by apparel and textile manufacturing, less than 10 percent of the roughly 12,000 manufacturing jobs on the SouthCoast - 991 - were in apparel or textile work.

Now with 590 workers, the JA Apparel plant employs roughly 60 percent of the people working in apparel and textile jobs in the 10-community region covered by the Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board Inc, a regional work force development group.

"It's very significant for the city [and] for this region," said Len Coriaty, the board's executive director. "This is a company that did survive the shakeout . . . It's great to have a flagship company like that make the investment."

The new distribution center cuts the time it takes to manufacture and ship suits by seven days. This helps the company feed retailers that want to shift quickly among styles or when their stores are having a run on certain clothing.

Men's apparel company expands in New Bedford The Providence Journal (Rhode Island) January 10, 2007 Wednesday

"The New Bedford facility helps ensure that we are responding rapidly to the needs of our customers, which gives us a unique competitive advantage," Staff said in a written statement announcing the opening of the expanded facility.

In a telephone interview yesterday from JA Apparel's headquarters in New York City, Staff explained the company's decision to cut against the grain in apparel manufacturing - a sector that has seen most of its jobs shift overseas.

Founded in 1987 by Boston native Joseph Abboud, the clothing manufacturer was bought for \$73 million in March 2004 by J.W. Childs Associates, a Boston private equity firm. Staff, an apparel industry veteran, led the buyout.

The executives considered following the industry's two-decade pattern of sending the manufacturing overseas since that could cut labor costs far below the \$12 an hour Abboud workers made.

But manufacturing in the United States has advantages, Staff said. Import duties levied on European clothing manufacturers and rebates on tariffs it pays help JA Apparel undercut prices on imported clothing.

Most importantly, he said, the Abboud plant had solid equipment and a stable, talented work force drawn from the region's Portuguese families.

"We weren't going to get any more quality by going outside the country and with more risk," he said. "The factory is our single biggest competitive advantage."

The plant and the workers couldn't stand still though, he said.

Staff brought "lean" manufacturing to the unionized plant in New Bedford.

Developed by Japanese carmaker Toyota, lean manufacturing is a review program aimed at cutting waste and increasing efficiency in a production system - from the receiving area all the way through manufacturing to shipping.

Moving shipping from central New Jersey to New Bedford, for instance, cut days off the shipping time to retailers.

Workers in the plant had to be retrained, much as they did at the auto factories and other manufacturers who've adopted lean processes.

Instead of working alone to produce batches of suit parts, the New Bedford workers work in groups that assemble one garment at a time. The workers are trained to do each task needed to assemble a garment. If someone gets backed up, a coworker can jump in to pick up the slack.

Speeding up the work allows the factory to push out more faster to high-end department stores such as Bloomingdale's, Nordstrom and Saks. The factory turns out as many as 1,200 suit jackets and 950 pairs of trousers each day, sending them out to 415 stores around the country. The suits retail for \$700 to \$1,000.

The company plans to have one-third of its production using the new system by this summer.

"We're certainly in the very early stages," Staff said. "We're certainly expecting the financial results to be there."

The company predicts it will do \$400 million in retail sales this year.

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A model in traditional sportswear walks down the runway at the Joseph Abboud Fall 2000 men's fashion show in New York.

REUTERS / BRAD RICKERBY

Men's apparel company expands in New Bedford The Providence Journal (Rhode Island) January 10, 2007 Wednesday

New Bedford Manufacturing

There were 8,045 manufacturing jobs in the city in 2005, down from 20,528 in 1985. In the Greater New Bedford area of 10 communities, once a textile hub, there were 11,939 manufacturing jobs, with about 990 in textiles and apparel.

Source: Center for Policy Analysis at UMass-Dartmouth

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Daily News Record

October 9, 2006

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HEADLINE: JA APPAREL GOES GLOBAL VIA LICENSING; COMPANY'S EXPANDED LICENSING PORTFOLIO EXTENDS JOSEPH ABOUD LABEL INTO 30 NEW COUNTRIES.

BYLINE: Gellers, Stan

BODY:

Byline: STAN GELLERS

NEW YORK - The 10 licenses that JA Apparel signed this year for its Joseph Abboud label have catapulted sales of licensed products to \$150 million-60 percent of the brand's \$250 million volume-and brought the brand to 30 new countries.

"That's the first time for the brand. Our licensing revenue is bigger than our owned volume," said Marty Staff, president and CEO.

Kenton Selvey, senior vice-president of licensing, added, "We were a suit company-now we're a total lifestyle company with a licensee structure based on our new brand architecture."

Selvey, a former Discovery Channel executive, said that a portfolio of labels has been created to carry a first-time Joseph Abboud boys' customer into his preteen years, then move him to the JOE Joseph Abboud mainstream contemporary label for his 22-30 years before graduating him to the company's core Joseph Abboud brand, which is targeted to the 35- to 55-year-old customer. New, too, is the Joseph Abboud Jeans Inc. label for the company's leisure-time wardrobe.

Selvey said that rather than signing on licensees for specific classifications, the company picked potential licensees based on the demographics of its different customers. Apparel still forms the base, but the range now includes luggage, home offerings and hotel amenities, or, as he explained, "products that would produce an emotional connection with the brand."

Among the 10 new licensees signed for the Joseph Abboud and JOE brands this year are Compania Mexicana de Trajes, a tailored clothing company with the master license for Mexico; Olivet International for luggage; and Essential Amenities for hotel amenities. As a result distribution has jumped from three to 33 countries including ones located in Central America, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, such as Mexico, Korea, China and India.

JA APPAREL GOES GLOBAL VIA LICENSING; COMPANY'S EXPANDED LICENSING PORTFOLIO EXTENDS JOSEPH ABBLOUD LABEL INTO 30 NEW COUNTRIES. Daily News Record October 9, 2006

Said Staff, "We expect to be in 45 to 50 countries in the next year with our licensed products, and grow our total volume to \$500 million by 2009."

Other licensing deals, Selvey noted, include a distribution agreement with Corporacion Oscar in Mexico for tailored clothing, footwear for Joseph Abboud and JOE by Prestige Footwear, eyewear for JOE from Altair, outerwear for both labels from the Levy Group, boys' belts and men's jewelry by Master Accessories, and JOE formalwear from Fabian.

In order to run this multifaceted business efficiently, JA Apparel has budgeted some \$28 million toward its licensing operation, beefing up staff both in-house and in the field to grow the business globally.

Staff said, "Once the license is signed, it's the after-sales that really make the difference. You have to be proactive, and licensing really hasn't been that way in the men's business."

Looking ahead, Selvey said the company's licensed products and activities will eventually include everything from grooming to international franchised stores along with home products, media and entertainment or what Staff described as "a logical extension of the brand into relevant lifestyle categories."

Caption(s): Marty Staff / The Joseph Abboud brand architecture

LOAD-DATE: November 4, 2006

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DSN Retailing Today

April 24, 2006

SECTION: Pg. 29(1) Vol. 45 No. 8 ISSN: 1530-6259

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HEADLINE: Average 'Joe' reflects renewed interest in suits;
JA Apparel did market research to launch new Joe men's wear collection

BYLINE: Nolan, Kelly

BODY:

Young men are rediscovering the suit. According to the latest data from The NPD Group, combined sales of suits, suit separates, jackets and sport coats grew 53% among men ages 18 to 24 last year. JA Apparel, which owns the Joseph Abboud brand name, is trying to take advantage of this statistic. The company is launching a new line, called Joe, exclusively in 200 Federated doors this July.

The line will include suits, suiting separates, outerwear, raincoats, ties, belts and even furnishings. Price points range from about \$39.50 for a tie up to about \$500 for a full suit. This line is specifically tailored for a younger audience, said Kenton Selvey, senior vp of licensing for JA Apparel, in an interview with DSN Retailing Today.

"This line isn't a Joseph Abboud-light," Selvey said. "This is specifically tailored for young men who are looking to buy their first suit."

JA Apparel has done about eight months of research so far on this new consumer through focus groups, telephone surveys and exit polls from stores.

"Our research showed that 58% of those we surveyed listed price as the biggest factor in making an apparel purchase," Selvey said. "Comfort came in at 53%, followed by style and color at 50% and fit at 43%."

The study also showed this young man idolizes Blink 182, sports stars and Eminem more than he admires Donald Trump. His favorite brands are J Crew, Banana Republic, Dell and Volkswagen.

To cater to this man's preferences, JA Apparel plans to advertise the Joe line by bringing it to the consumer. The company is considering doing online promotions with men's magazines like Maxim or young online dating services like Match.com. The site would include tips on tailored clothing to wear to work, out to a bar or on a date.

The company is also planning to promote the line on college campuses, gyms, bars and golf courses. To appeal to the tech-savvy side of this consumer, the company has adopted slick names like "AX7" (for Agenda suit with a 7-inch

Average 'Joe' reflects renewed interest in suits; JA Apparel did market research to launch new Joe men's wear collection
DSN Retailing Today April 24, 2006

drop) instead of pretentious names like Fairbanks or Preston, Selvey said.

"We're really speaking in his language," Selvey explained.

The line will land in cities that JA Apparel has identified as early job centers, primarily located in Macy's East, Macy's North and Florida, Selvey said. Depending on the line's success, it's possible that it could grow to more stores from there. In its first 18 months, JA Apparel hopes that Joe will rake in about \$100 million in sales, he said.

Joe should expand into sportswear items by fall 2007, Selvey said. This will make it even easier for young men to keep up with the latest trend of mixing and matching casual and career clothing.

"We definitely had that [trend] in mind when we came up with this line," Selvey said. "Young men want something versatile that they can wear to everything."

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HFN The Weekly Newspaper for the Home Furnishing Network

April 7, 2003

SECTION: Pg. 46 ; ISSN: 1082-0310

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LENGTH: 369 words

HEADLINE: EXCEL, JOSEPH ABOUD REACH LICENSING DEAL ON NEW LINE; Excel Group, Joseph Abboud Environments

BODY:

NEW YORK-The Excel Group has signed a licensing agreement with JA Apparel, a division of the Italian company Holding di Partecipazioni, for the manufacture, distribution and sale of Joseph Abboud Environments dinnerware, flatware, glassware, table linens and giftware.

The complete tabletop collection will be unveiled at a yet-to-be-named showroom space in the fall. The Excel Group will be responsible for the production, sale and distribution of products to better department and specialty stores nationwide. The tabletop collection will reflect Abboud's modern classic and sophisticated design.

"We are extremely excited about this partnership," said Maria Vicari, vice president of licensing for Joseph Abboud. "Our vision of a three-tiered complete tabletop business targeting everyday, entertainment and formal in a coordinated design effort from textile base to glass will be realized by the talents and capabilities the Excel Group brings to the partnership. The Joseph Abboud Co. brings the design and marketing elements."

"The Excel team is so pumped about the opportunity to combine the brilliant lifestyle touch and feel of Joseph Abboud with the product ranges that we know and understand so well," said Rick Lapine, Excel's chief merchandising officer. "This first collection, when assembled, will speak volumes of a way of life that is comfortable and accessible, yet filled with style and feeling."

The license with Excel is part of JA Apparel's ongoing effort to expand the brand. "Finding the right partners is always a challenge, and we are pleased with the continued progress we are making in the home furnishings business," said Bob Wichser, JA Apparel's president and chief operating officer.

JA Apparel currently has licensing agreements for fashion bedding, basic bedding and down products, towels, bath accessories, decorative fabrics, decorative pillows, mattresses and area rugs.

"Our goal is to translate the current success of our menswear businesses into the home furnishings market. In addition, we are exploring numerous opportunities to target the female consumer as we look to further broaden Joseph Abboud into a total lifestyle brand," added Wichser.

IAC-CREATE-DATE: April 14, 2003

EXCEL, JOSEPH ABBOUD REACH LICENSING DEAL ON NEW LINE; Excel Group, Joseph Abboud
Environments HFN The Weekly Newspaper for the Home Furnishing Network April 7, 2003

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